

Notes and Observations

CURIOUS BEHAVIOUR OF AESHNA CYANEA MÜLLER: SOUTHERN HAWKER. — I have been studying the flora and fauna of a 9½ acre park in Eltham, London SE9, consisting of a lake, small still pond, woodland, garden and open lawns. During the hot summer of 1983, there was an abundance of dragonflies and damselflies skimming the lake and patrolling the woodland paths. On August 20, I observed a female hawker dragonfly, *Aeshna cyanea*, laying eggs in the rotting wood of a horizontal log that served as a beam for a tiny bridge over the pond. The shallow crevices in the damp wood were soft and smooth. It was five o'clock in the afternoon when I noticed the Aeschna in the dappled light. I watched her for at least 15 minutes as, time after time, she deliberately but gently pressed the tip of her body into a crevice. Several times she reversed her position from facing east to facing west, but continued to lay eggs in approximately the same place. I was within two feet of her, but she was not disturbed by my presence. At last, she flew slowly across the pond and out of view.

On August 21, at eleven o'clock in the morning, there was a repeat performance of the day before, possibly by the same individual. This time the insect was in full sun, although the wood had remained quite damp. I had never seen *A. cyanea* behave in this way, though have read that eggs are laid on submerged plants and sometimes in mud. Was this insect guilty of aberrant behaviour? Although I continued to visit the pond frequently, I did not witness this method of egg-laying again. Because this behaviour was of considerable interest to me, I thought I would share the experience with other naturalists. — J. W. CHANDLEY (Mrs.), 121 Tarnwood Park, Court Road, Eltham, London SE9 5PE.

THE MOUSE AT SUGAR IN BEDFORDSHIRE. — When my torch lit up a sugar patch during a round in early October 1983, I was surprised to see momentarily a fine specimen of the Mouse. This was not however *Amphipyra tragopoginis* Clerck, a frequent visitor to the sugar patch. It was instead *Apodemus sylvaticus* L. of the Order Rodentia — the Wood Mouse. — K. F. WEBB, 2 Kingsdown Avenue, Luton Beds LU2 7BU.

MYTHIMNA OBSOLETA HBN. (OBSCURE WAINSCOT) WITH DISCAL SPOTS ON UNDERWING: A POSSIBLE IDENTIFICATION PROBLEM. — Whilst dealing with *Mythimna straminea* Treitschke, *The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland*, volume 9, lists *Mythimna obsoleta* as a similar species, and draws attention to the presence of a discal spot on the underside of each wing of *M. straminea*, compared to the immaculate state of this region of *M. obsoleta*. This characteristic is not however a reliable one for separating the two species.

I took a series of six specimens which I took to be *M. obsoleta* at East Ham, Essex, (O.S. ref. TQ 439832), on 19th July, 1983